

# The Southerner.

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Whole No. 56.

## THE SOUTHERNER.

GEO. HOWARD, Editor & Proprietor.

TERMS—PER ANNUM.

If paid within two months, \$2 00

Otherwise, 2 50

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## AGRICULTURAL.



Agriculture is the chief foundation of a nation's power, as it not only furnishes man with food and clothing, but also with materials for the mechanic arts, and commerce.

From the American Farmer.

### The Ruffin Premium.

In the Sept. No. of the American Farmer, for 1851, page 112, will be found the offer by Edmund Ruffin, Esq. of Virginia, of a Premium of a set of the "Farmer's Register," elegantly bound, for the best set of experiments made in 1851, in harvesting corn, saving fodder, &c. The premium was placed in charge of the Agricultural Clubs of Talbot Co. and by the following report, it will be seen, has been awarded to Thomas R. Holliday, Esq. of Talbot. The experiments will be read with much interest, and no doubt will lead to others. The Societies having referred the paper of Mr. Holliday, to Mr. Culbert, Pres. of the Md. State Agricultural Society, the following communication was received from him:

RIVERSDALE, Oct. 18, 1852.

Gentlemen:—Your communication, enclosing the statement of Thos. R. Holliday, Esq., relative to certain experiments made by him to ascertain the best mode for securing Corn and Fodder, was not received until yesterday in consequence of my absence from home for the last two weeks. I regret that so important a question has been left to my decision, because I do not profess any great experience in any other method than cutting it up at the ground so soon as the corn will bear it. Upon a careful examination of the terms and conditions upon which the Premium is offered, I do not hesitate to recommend that it be awarded to Mr. Holliday for his industry and public spirit in undertaking an experiment which, as he very truly remarks, required a great amount of time, labor and precision. He should receive not only the Premium but the thanks of all interested in the decision of this important question, for the intrinsic merits of the essay, as well as the delicacy and modesty with which it is offered; and it is to be hoped that this experiment will be followed by others, until we shall have something upon which the utmost reliance may be placed. The whole of the corn-growing region are greatly indebted to Mr. Ruffin, for his liberality in offering these handsome Premiums.

Having discharged this duty, I trust I shall be excused by yourselves as well as Mr. Holliday, for some reflections which have occurred to me in the examination of this essay. Passing over No. 1, 2 and 3, I find he states the profit of No. 4, to be \$1.62, after deducting the loss in corn, but I confess I am not satisfied with the data upon which this part of the statement is made; because if the fodder was all good on that portion as on the others, it should have yielded as much profit in blades as No. 2, and as much profit in tops as No. 3, and the account would then stand thus:

Value of blades on No. 4, \$2 67

Value of tops on do. 1 20

Deducting for seasoning 38.87

blades, as in No. 2, 47

Deducting for securing tops 24

as in No. 3, 98

Deducting the loss in corn, \$1 69

\$2.18

By the above statement it will be perceived that No. 4, exceeds No. 2, eighteen cents, in place of falling short thirty-eight cents, as per his statement. Again, I think the greatest injustice has been done No. 6, in that statement, by valuing the whole stalk, blades and tops, at less than one-half of the blades and tops in the previous numbers; for I

contend, if the corn was cut off as soon as it was sufficiently matured, that the blades and tops should be at least equal in value to those pulled and cut from the stalk. I go even beyond this, and insist that the stalk itself is worth more than the blades and tops together; or in other words, I assert, that an acre of corn, cut off at the ground, properly secured in shocks until the corn is husked off, and then cut up and ground fine, will feed more stock than the top and blades of two acres, pulled in the usual mode. I think also that it will be found, upon further investigation, that corn cut off at the ground, will mature the grain better than where the blades and tops are cut, because it will have the advantage of all the sap that may be in the stalk at the time; whereas the stalks on that portion where blades and tops are cut, will at once dry up, and afford no further nourishment to the grain; but even allowing No. 6 to lose in corn what he estimates, still I make, according to my theory, the account stand thus:

Value of blades, as in

No. 2, \$2.67

Value of tops, as in No. 3, 1.20

Value of stalks, 3.87

\$7.74

Deduct for seasoning fodder, 50

do. for loss in corn, 1.37

\$1.87

\$5.87

There are other portions of the essay that do not entirely meet my approbation, but I have already extended my remarks much beyond what I intended, and therefore conclude by subscribing myself, Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

CHAS. B. CALVERT.

To M. TILGHMAN GOLDSBOROUGH Esq.

Secretary of Board of Trustees of M.

Agricultural Society of Eastern

Shore.

DAVID KERR, Esq.,

Secretary of the Farmers' Inspecting

Association for Talbot County.

Gentlemen: I give below a statement

of experiments made by me, in reference

to the loss and gain resulting from

the different modes of saving fodder,

and hereby inform you that I am a

competitor for the "Ruffin Premium."

On the 17th of September, 1851, the

corn being in a good state for any of the

usual processes of fodder saving, I laid

off thirty-six rows of one hundred and

thirty hills each,—the hills being 3

feet 6 inches by 3 feet 9 or 10 inches—

thus giving within a small fraction of

one quarter of an acre to each experi-

ment made in the following order, by

single rows throughout, so as to preserve

the greatest possible uniformity in the

growth of corn.

1st row—Fodder untouched, corn left

standing.

2d " Blades pulled, do

3d " Tops cut, do

4th " Top cut and blades pulled,

5th " Blades pulled and corn cut

off at ground, shocked.

6th row—fodder untouched, cut off

at ground and shocked, and so on.

The blades from one quarter acre,

well cured in dry weather, and after-

wards kept in a locked corn house,

weighed, on the 4th of November, 89

lbs.; and the tops from the same quan-

ty of land, on the same day, and under

like circumstances, weighed 144 lbs.

On the 6th and 7th of November, the

corn was husked by six men, and so ar-

ranged as to prevent mistakes; and as

each parcel was husked, it was carried

off to a corn house, in which there was

no other corn, and a note made as to

the exact place where it was put.

On the 17th of January, 1852, the

ears in each parcel were counted and

reduced to the same number so as both

to correct mistakes from accident in

housing or missing hills. One half of

each was then shelled by hand, measur-

ed and weighed; but it having soon oc-

curred to me that the habit contracted

in assorting corn might have caused the

men employed in handling it, insensibly

to take the largest ears for the first half,

I thought that shrinkage might not be

as accurately tested by leaving the lat-

ter half until May, (according to the

directions of the societies,) as by keep-

ing in bags a half bushel of each, sus-

pended in a place where there was a free

access of air; and, therefore, early in

February I shelled, measured, and

weighed the remainder, which being

added to that first shelled, and multi-

plied by four, in order to greater con-

venience in comparing the product of

fodder with the loss of corn by the acre,

instead of the quarter acre, gave the

following results:

No. 1, per acre, 41 bushels, 1 gallon,

3 qts., wt. 2327

No. 2, " 41 1/2 " " 2305

No. 3, " 40 1/2 " " 2252

No. 4, " 39 1/2 " " 2180

No. 5, " 39 " " 2172

No. 6, " 38 1/2 " " 2030

It will thus be seen that while from

which the blades were pulled exceeded

that where the fodder was untouched,

one half bushel and one gallon per acre,

and yet that No. 1 exceeded it 22 lbs.

in weight. This difference I cannot ac-

count for, except by supposing either

some accident in weight and measure,

or some slight difference in the growth

of the corn, and would not conclude

from such a single fact that the actual

quantity of corn would in all cases be

increased by stripping off the blades, al-

though it will be seen by the above

statement that when the corn is to be

cut off, there is a palpable advantage in

first pulling the blades, if the corn is

to be sold during the winter; and this

may be accounted for, I think, by the

freer circulation of air through the

shocks, when the blades have been pulled,

which prevents the corn from going

through a sweat, as is often the case

when the blades are left: the result of

which sweat seems to be to expel mois-

ture from the grain. In this case it is

proper to state, that the amount of

damaged corn in any of the parcels did

not exceed more than one ear in two

hundred, and the greatest number was

where the corn was cut off without first

stripping it of the blades: such had been

my general observation before, and I

was not surprised to find by actual ex-

periment that the corn was diminished

in quantity as in quality by this operation.

It will have been seen that the corn

in this case yielded about 8 barrels to

the acre of about thirty-one or two hun-

dered corn hills; and according to the

best information I have on the subject,

a little over three thousand corn hills is

an average day's work in pulling blades,

including the time occupied in tying up

and carrying out to the turning rows;

and the price of blades, in November,

is rarely, if ever less than 75 cents per

hundred pounds.

Say then, 356 lbs. blades per acre,

at 75 cts. per 100, is \$2 67

22 lbs. of corn at 50 cts. per bush-

el of 56 lbs. is about 0.20

2.47

Allow for hire of hand the usual

price per day for saving fodder,

35 cts. and 124 cts. board, 0.47

Leaving a profit, per 2,200 corn

hills, \$2.00

No. 3 tops cut, yielding 576 lbs.

worth \$1.20

Deduct for corn lost, 1/2 bushel 1

gal. 3 qts., 0.36

0.84

Deduct also for labor about 24

cents, 0.24

Profit, \$0.60

No. 4 tops cut and blades pulled,

worth, clear of cost of saving, \$2.60

Deduct for loss in corn, 1 1/2 bus.,

1 gal., 3 qts., 6.98

Still leaving a profit of \$1.62

No. 5, blades pulled and cut off

—blades, \$2.00

Tops worth half as much as when

separately cut, 0.60

2.60

Deduct labor of cutting and

shocking, say 0.50

\$2.10

Deduct also for corn lost, 2 bus.,

1 gal., 3 qts., 1.11

Leaving a profit by the two

processes of \$0.99

No. 6, cut off, with the tops and

blades left.

The fodder I cannot well estimate, as

the superior value of the stalk is to be

estimated, in addition to the blades and

tops, which, with careful handling, af-

ter the corn is husked, are far from be-

ing lost, but suppose it to be 1/2 the val-

ue of the blades, \$0.89

And 1/2 the value of the tops, 0.60

\$1.49

Deduct for 2 1/2 bushels corn lost, 1.37

0.12

Deduct labor in cutting off, 0.50

0.50

Deep ploughing greatly improves the

productive powers of every variety of

soil, that is not wet.

Making, as compared with No.

1, a positive loss per acre, of \$0.38

And a loss, as compared with

No. 5, of 1.37

as compared with No. 4, of 2.00

as compared with No. 3, of 0.98

as compared with No. 2, of 2.30

I now state the loss in weight and

measure of the different parcels, one-

half bushel of each having been kept in

bags, in the same corn house, and the

full measure being made up in each

case before weighing, and then calculat-

ed by the weight and not the measure,

for it was apparent that some parcels

had been more troubled by mice than

others.

No. 1 lost 4 lbs. weight and 4 pints

measure per bushel.

No. 2 " 3 1/2 " and 2 1/2 " "

No. 3 " 4 " and 3 " "

No. 4 " 3 1/2 " and 4 " "

No. 5 " 7 " and 6 " "

No. 6 " 2 " and 3 " "

It thus seems that the shrinking, by

measure, does not exactly correspond

with the loss by weight. No. 5, for in-

stance, lost 7 lbs. after the 6 pints which

it had shrunk were added,—making, on

the whole, a loss of about 12 lbs. per

bushel. The greatest shrinkage was,

however, evidently in this case. The

excess of actual loss over No. 1, is about

4 1/2 lbs., allowing 14 oz. as the weight of

a pint, which I find to be a loss, per

acre, of \$1.62 as compared with No. 1,

when weighed August 15th. There

seems then to be, in this case, shrinkage

included, a loss of 63 cents, instead of a

gain of 99 cents, as compared with No. 1,

by the operation of pulling the blades

before cutting the corn.

The comparison of No. 6, upon a

minute calculation, makes a loss of near

\$2.75 per acre, which just reverses the

result